

WASHINGTON HERITAGE REGISTER

A) Identification

Historic Name: **F/V Shenandoah**

Common Name: Purse Seiner Shenandoah

Address: 4121 Harborview Drive

City: Gig Harbor

County: Pierce

B) Site Access (describe site access, restrictions, etc.)

The Purse Seiner Shenandoah is on static display in the Maritime Gallery of the Gig Harbor Peninsula Historical Society and Museum.

C) Property owner(s), Address and Zip

Name: Gig Harbor Peninsula Historical Society and Museum

Address: 4121 Harborview Drive

City: Gig Harbor

State: WA

Zip: 98335

D) Legal boundary description and boundary justification

Tax No./Parcel:

Boundary Justification: The Shenandoah is located inside the museum and the nominated boundaries are restricted to the vessel itself.

FORM PREPARED BY

Name: Jean Hannah

Address: 4121 Harborview Drive

City / State / Zip: Gig Harbor

Email: collections@harborhistorymuseum.org

Phone: 253-858-6722

Nomination Date: June 2021

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E) Category of Property (Choose One)

- ☐ building ☐ structure (irrigation system, bridge, etc.) ☐ district
☒ object (statue, grave marker, vessel, etc.) ☐ cemetery/burial site
☐ historic site (site of an important event) ☐ archaeological site
☐ traditional cultural property (spiritual or creation site, etc.)
☐ cultural landscape (habitation, agricultural, industrial, recreational, etc.)

F) Area of Significance – Check as many as apply

- ☒ The property belongs to the early settlement, commercial development, or original native occupation of a community or region.
- ☒ The property is directly connected to a movement, organization, institution, religion, or club which served as a focal point for a community or group.
- ☒ The property is directly connected to specific activities or events which had a lasting impact on the community or region.
- ☐ The property is associated with legends, spiritual or religious practices, or life ways which are uniquely related to a piece of land or to a natural feature.
- ☐ The property displays strong patterns of land use or alterations of the environment which occurred during the historic period (cultivation, landscaping, industry, mining, irrigation, recreation).
- ☒ The property is directly associated with an individual who made an important contribution to a community or to a group of people.
- ☒ The property has strong artistic, architectural or engineering qualities, or displays unusual materials or craftwork belonging to a historic era.
- ☐ The property was designed or built by an influential architect, or reflects the work of an important artisan.
- ☐ Archaeological investigation of the property has or will increase our understanding of past cultures or life ways.

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G) Property Description

The fishing vessel Shenandoah is currently located inside the Gig Harbor Museum and was acquired by the facility from a private owner in 2000. Property description is based on condition at time of acquisition.

Rig/Type of Craft: Purse Seiner

Trade: Fishing (Salmon)

Official Number: 224606

Length: 64'

Beam: 15' 4"

Depth: 7' 3"

Net Tons: 32

Gross Displacement: 47

The Fishing Vessel (F/V) SHENANDOAH is a 64-foot salmon purse seine vessel of classic design and traditional West Coast wood construction. She is a heavy-built displacement hull with round bilges, plumb stem, straight keel, and an elliptical horseshoe stern. The hull sheer line runs unbroken full length, while the raised bulwark sheer breaks aft of midship to accommodate the fishing operations on the working deck.

The method employed to construct the *Shenandoah* is best described as longitudinal (fore and aft) carvel hull planking over steam bent frames. Originally, all hull planking was of old growth Douglas Fir (net thickness 1 ¾") and side frames of White Oak (net 2 ½" molded; net 3" sided). Vessel's decking and deck beams are constructed of old growth Douglas Fir. All decking is straight laid (net thickness 1 ¾"; net width 3 ½"); deck beams are sawn to shape and are of various dimensions depending upon their placement and load requirements. Interior hull structural members are of old growth Douglas Fir of random thicknesses and lengths. A distinguishing construction feature of West Coast working vessels such as the *Shenandoah* is the use of alternate hull framing in the after sections where the turn of the bilge is too radical to allow for steam bent oak framing. In this area of the stern the hull planking is fastened to double-sawn Douglas Fir framework. The existing deck house on the *Shenandoah*, built as a replacement to the original in 1949, is stick framed with Yellow Cedar 2" thick stock and sheathed in ½" thick marine plywood.

The backbone of the vessel, including the keel, keelson, bow stem, dead wood, forefoot, horntimber, shaft log and horseshoe stern timbers are all old growth Douglas Fir with the exception of a repaired section of bow stem which is of Alaska Yellow Cedar. The stern post is a hard wood of uncertain species (perhaps White Oak or Iron Bark). The cap rails, rub guards and worm shoe are all of 2" Iron Bark wood which is extremely dense and durable.

All hull and deck fastenings are of hot-dipped galvanized iron. Most structural framework members are thru-bolted together with either 1/2", 5/8" or 3/4" diameter carriage bolts. Planking and decking is spiked to frames and beams with 1/4"x4" or 5" square ship spikes. Hull and deck seams are caulked with cotton and oakum and payed with either cement, seam putty or marine glue (deck pitch). Exterior coatings are solvent-based marine paints; copper antifouling below the waterline and marine enamels above the waterline. The decks are tarred and oiled.

Her final rigging was as a drum seiner for use in the Puget Sound region. Her deck house is located forward of amidships with raised forward and side decks. The main working deck runs with the sheer from the back of the cabin to the stern.

Main Deck Arrangement

Forward most on the bulwark is mounted the anchor and anchor chock. Aft on center is the anchor winch. To starboard, is an escape hatch/companion way to access the foc'sle. Midship is the deck house with side decks leading to the main working deck on the starboard side is an access door to the main cabin and access below decks to the engine room. Also on starboard, is a ladder to access the fly bridge. Aft of the cabin is the main working deck with the mast and boom assembly mounted on center, galley access door to port, and marine head compartment to port. To port and starboard, on the bulwarks, are mounted purse davits. On center, aft of the mast, is the purse winch; aft is the fish hold; aft is the aluminum seine drum; aft at the stern is an aluminum roller and fair lead assembly. The original seine net table was replaced with a drum type.

Main Cabin Arrangement

Forward is the wheelhouse with helm station and electronics. To starboard is an access door to the side deck. Aft of the wheelhouse is a corridor which serves as a stateroom with double berth and access to the galley. Aft is the galley with dinette to port and counter-top, sink, and storage to starboard. A diesel cook stove is located along the aft bulkhead. Access to below decks and exit to the side deck are on starboard and exit to main deck is along the aft bulkhead to port.

Fly Bridge Deck Arrangement

A fly bridge sits atop the deck house. The bridge deck consists of a forward helm station with a bench seat. Aft is a radar stand and the main engine exhaust cowling. To starboard is a pipe ladder to access the side deck and storage boxes are located aft and port.

Below Deck Arrangement

Forward is a fore peak storage compartment with access door. Aft of the storage compartment, are two stacked bunks (two to port; two to starboard) referred to as the V-Berth. Between the V-Berth bunks and the aft bunks is a bench, hanging locker, storage compartments, and a ladder through the foc'sle hatch. Aft of the second set of bunks is a ladder leading to the main cabin and the starboard side deck. Also aft of the second set of bunks is the engine room with the main engine on center, fuel tanks port and starboard, and the main battery bank on starboard. Aft to port is an access door to the dry fish hold. Aft is the lazarette with rudder port and steering gear. Aft is the stern.

Engine

The *Shenandoah* had multiple engines over the years. At the time of donation, the vessel was powered by a Detroit Diesel engine model 12V-71 with 12 cylinders generating a maximum of 300 hp with a Twin Disc MG 514 reduction gear at a 3.5:1 gear ratio. The single screw vessel turned a four-bladed bronze propeller 51" diameter by 40" pitch. Cruising speed for the *Shenandoah* was approximately 9 knots at 1,600 rpm.

Since the year 2000, the vessel has undergone extensive stabilization and restoration treatments. To date, all deck hardware, fishing equipment, mechanical and electrical systems, transverse bulkheads, rigging and forecastle interior components have been removed. To help ensure the vessel's hull and deck structural integrity, temporary strongbacks have been installed. The exterior hull planking coatings and caulking have been removed to accommodate the application of borate preservatives and penetrating oils.

H) Significance

The Purse Seiner *Shenandoah*, completed in 1925, is historically significant for its direct connection to the boat building industry in Gig Harbor. Designed and built by the Skansie's Ship Building Company, the boat represents the high point of their business and innovations in the boat building industry. Additionally, the fishing vessel represents the larger fishing industry in Gig Harbor and throughout the Puget Sound.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s a number of entrepreneurs recognized in Gig Harbor the opportunity for a boat building industry. The bay offered a protected harbor and easy access to materials.

The earliest known efforts date to 1886 when Edgar Patrick, who moved here from Albert Lea, Minnesota, began building rowboats and repairing other vessels first on his farm, then along the Gig Harbor waterfront. In 1888, the first known power boat built in Gig Harbor, the *Albert Lea* was built by the Gig Harbor Lumber Company. In 1890 the Lumber Company owner won the contract to build a schooner yacht, the *Vine*. The

Vine was used not only as a pleasure boat, but also as a cargo vessel. It was loaded with lumber when it left Gig Harbor for Tacoma for final outfitting.

Though at least ten additional boats were either built or repaired in Gig Harbor between 1883 and 1906, it was in the 1910s that local ship building began to take off. More than 140 wooden boats were constructed in Gig Harbor between 1912 and 1931 at three shipyards: Skansie's Ship Building Company, Robert Crawford Shipyard, and Anderson & Son's. The majority of the vessels were purse seiners built for fishermen. Other craft included steamboats, ferries, fire barges, tugboats, and pleasure craft.

Skansie's Ship Building Company was by far the most successful, building more than 100 vessels in a 20-year period, including the *Shenandoah* launched in 1925. Mitchell, Joe, Andrew, and Peter Skansie emigrated from Dalmatia to Gig Harbor at the turn of the century. They established Skansie Brothers' Shipyard in 1910. Shortly after, Mitchell and Joe changed the name of the yard to Skansie's Ship Building Company. Joe worked in the shipyard for a while but eventually became a ferry operator. Peter and Andrew went on to become successful commercial fishermen, leaving Mitchell as sole operator of the shipyard.

For the first two years, Skansie finished hulls purchased from the Martinolich yard in Dockton, on Puget Sound's Maury Island. Skansie added pilothouses and rigged the boats for purse seining. Then in 1912, Mitchell and Joseph Skansie hired Sam Kazulin as the shipyard manager. Kazulin came from a family of master shipbuilders in Dalmatia region of Croatia and brought a deep level of skill and expertise to the company. Soon the Skansie name on a boat signified quality.

In 1912 the shipyard built the *Oceania*, a purse seiner, from the keel up. Between 1912 and 1949, the company constructed 96 seiners as well as several ferries, cannery tenders, and yachts. The seiners made up a significant portion of the West Coast fishing fleet. Skansie built one of the first gasoline launches for seine fishing vessel when most fishermen were still using oars and pulling nets by hand.

In addition to his successful shipyard, Mitchell founded the Washington Navigation Company to build and run car ferries across the Sound. The first ferry Mitchell built for his new company was the *Defiance*, followed two years later by the *Skansonia*. Other ferries built and run by the Washington Navigation Company include the *Wollochet*, *City of Steilacoom*, *Fox Island*, and *Vashonia*.

The Depression brought an end to most of the commercial boat building in the harbor. Mitchell died in 1939 and his son Bill succeeded him as owner of the shipyard. During World War II, Bill leased the yard to another boat builder. The yard was then renamed Gig Harbor Ship Company and produced military vessels including tugboats and fire barges.

After the war, the facility was used primarily for haul-out and repair. Bill sold the shipyard in the 1959. The yard changed owners three times during the next seven

years. A section of the original building was torn down in 1994 but the rest remains standing.

When the Skansies began fishing in Puget Sound, fishing boats were still largely powered by sail or oar. The brothers began experimenting with gas-powered engines for boats and started retrofitting older boats with engines. In 1902 they built their first motorized fishing boat, which featured a 7-horse power gasoline engine.

In 1910 the Skansies built the *Navigator*, a fishing vessel with a manually operated seine. A seine (pronounced "sane") is a large net with floats on the top and weighted at the bottom. The European method of purse seine fishing was introduced to the Pacific Northwest by Croatian fishermen. It utilizes the seine net to encircle and capture a school of fish. The net features a float line that floats on the water. Weighted at the bottom, the net hangs down in the water from the float. A lead line edges the bottom of the net, and the purse line runs through the rings attached to the lead line. When a school of fish has swum into the net, the fishermen pull on the lead line and it closes the bottom of the net and forms a purse, trapping the fish. The net is then pulled alongside or hauled aboard the vessel. This method of catching fish is largely used to catch schools of fish near the surface, like salmon, Pacific Cod, pollock, and herring.

Reportedly around 1910, the Skansies built the first gasoline launch for purse seining. It was a change that came about out of a desire to stay abreast of, or ahead of, the competition, and it created a new era of fishing in the Pacific Northwest. The change allowed for easier movement in the sound, increasing the range, the carrying capacity and the endurance of the vessels.

During the company's infancy, the brothers continued to fish during the spring and summer season. Their experience as fishermen helped them modify the design of purse seiners (purse-seine fishing vessels), altering the flat-bed oval bow to a teardrop-shape to improve fuel efficiency. The first boat built in the Skansie's Ship Building Company yard was the fishing vessel *Oceania*. The 64-foot craft featured a 50-horsepower gasoline engine and was designed for the Skansie fishing fleet.

The success of the *Oceania* was followed by the *Mermaid* in 1912; the *President*, *Monarch*, *St. Joseph*, and *Oceana* in 1913; and the *Governor*, *Johnny E*, *Katherine*, and *President II* in 1914. The shipyard experienced a particular boom in the first half of 1915, completing six boats in just six months as fishermen anticipated a big run of humpback (pink) salmon. Boats built in 1915 included the *Louisiana* and the *Commander*, equipped with 40-horsepower Frisco Standard engines. Over the next decade, the Skansie's Ship Building Company built numerous fishing vessels, several of which were for family members involved in commercial fishing. These included the *Spokane* and *Independence* in 1917, the *Detroit* in 1919, and the *Vernon* in 1920. In 1919, the Skansies also built the 75-foot *Buddie* for the Alaska Pacific Fisheries company. She featured an 80-horsepower Union engine which worked in conjunction with the Alaska Pacific Fishers packing plants.

By 1926, the Skansie's Ship Building Company employed a crew of 26 workers. During 1926, the Skansie's had another construction boom, building 12 boats in that year alone.

F/V Shenandoah

The 64-foot *Shenandoah*, was built in 1925 at the beginning of the golden age of purse seiner construction. Built for Pasco Dorotich, his son John, and his son-in-law Nick Beandz (Nikola Bezmalinovic), she was first launched in April of 1925. She was a sophisticated vessel with beautifully detailed trim work. Electric lighting in the engine room was installed as it was built, effectively reducing fire hazards. It has a Northwest design of a round stern to prevent catching the nets, curved sawn timber to provide more strength, and a lower back deck for easier hauling of fish onto the deck and into the hold. The foredeck is raised to allow for more room in the engine and crew quarters. The shape of the boat, with a flat, long run aft and a counter stern (overhanging the keel), puts the propeller further from the nets. It also has a beaver tail to help keep nets out of the propeller. When the boat is empty it floats higher, but when loaded with fish it sinks lower while retaining the buoyancy needed for the vessel to return to the dock or the cannery tender.

The Purse Seiner *Shenandoah* is a classic example of a wood-hulled Puget Sound purse seiner from the early to mid-twentieth century. She is one of the last of the Gig Harbor- built purse seiners and one of only two Skansie-built fishing vessels remaining in Gig Harbor. Her legacy is rich with the heritage of the men who skippered these timeless vessels, of the commercial fishing industry that supported the growing community, and of the carpenters and shipwrights who built innovation and beauty into every vessel launched.

Pasco's son John took over the vessel in the 1930s, and the Janovich family purchased her in 1967 from the Dorotich estate. From the first fish hauled aboard her deck, the *Shenandoah* was continuously operated by a top producing skipper.

Though the *Shenandoah* operated almost exclusively at the Salmon Banks in the San Juan Islands of Washington State, her first seasons were spent tending fish traps in Alaska for Bez's first cannery.

Over the years, shipboard improvements in equipment continued, reflecting the changes in the fishing industry. More powerful engines were installed several times, a larger pilot house was fitted to the deck in 1949, new bulwarks were added, a Puretic Power Block was installed, and eventually the vessel was converted to a drum seiner. In addition to the skill of the skippers and the crews, these equipment changes established *Shenandoah* skippers as formidable competitors in Puget Sound.

Just as the equipment changed, so did the male fishermen's views of allowing women on board the fishing vessels. The *Shenandoah* was one of the first to hire women crew

when Lou Janovich joined the team. Later, Lou's daughter, Bunky Janovich, was hired on as cook for the 1989 fishing season. Bunky crewed for many seasons, and often brought her young daughter, Amanda, with her on the boat.

For more than 100 years, the commercial fishing industry has played an integral role in the rhythm of life in the small Puget Sound town of Gig Harbor, Washington. Starting with Samuel Jerisich, Peter Goldsmith, and John Farragut in the 1890s, fishermen and their families forged a legacy still visible today along the historic waterfront, from supporting local merchants, sawmills and boatyards to building schools, churches, and community halls.

Gig Harbor's commercial fishing fleet eventually became one of the largest and most successful on the West Coast, earning millions of dollars and supplying fish to local canneries for worldwide distribution. The successes peaked in the 1940s and early 1950s, and the 58-foot rule in Alaska ended *Shenandoah's* days of Alaska fishing for good. The maximum length allowed for purse seiners in Alaska remains 58 feet to this day. Skansie seiners, and other fishing vessels over 58 feet, then became the dynamos of the San Juan Salmon Banks. The Boldt Decision of 1974, upholding treaty fishing rights for Puget Sound Native Americans, drastically curtailed the fish quotas for area commercial fishermen, signaling the end of an era for commercial fishing. Today, Gig Harbor's fleet continues its fishing tradition established more than 100 years ago and remains a vibrant part of the harbor and its economy.

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I) Documentation

Xerox and attach any information or evidence that supports the property's significance.

Written Sources (*books, articles, newspapers*):

Bassett, Joan "A Town that Rises or Falls with the Tide" Seattle Post Intelligencer, June 6, 1971.

Chase, Katie "Skansie Shipbuilding Company (Gig Harbor) – Historylink.com
<https://www.historylink.org/file/20170>

City of Gig Harbor Historic Register: 762 08.11.08 Fishing Vessel Shenandoah
(Interior and Exterior of Vessel)

Dustrude, Louise "Fishing Then and Now" Saltwater People Historical Society BLOG –
Sept 26, 2013
<https://saltwaterpeoplehistoricalsociety.blogspot.com/2013/09/fishing-then-and-now-by-louise-dustrude.html>

Halsey, Greg memoir of his time aboard the Shenandoah undated

Historic American Engineering Record - HAER WA-178

Patrick, Nathan "Crafting of an American Dream: The Skansie Shipbuilding Company"
UW-Tacoma undergraduate thesis – Fall 2018.

Spadoni, Greg The Beginnings of Boat Building in Gig Harbor, Washington 2020

Tacoma Daily News "Cannery Tender to be Launched" April 3, 1925

Media

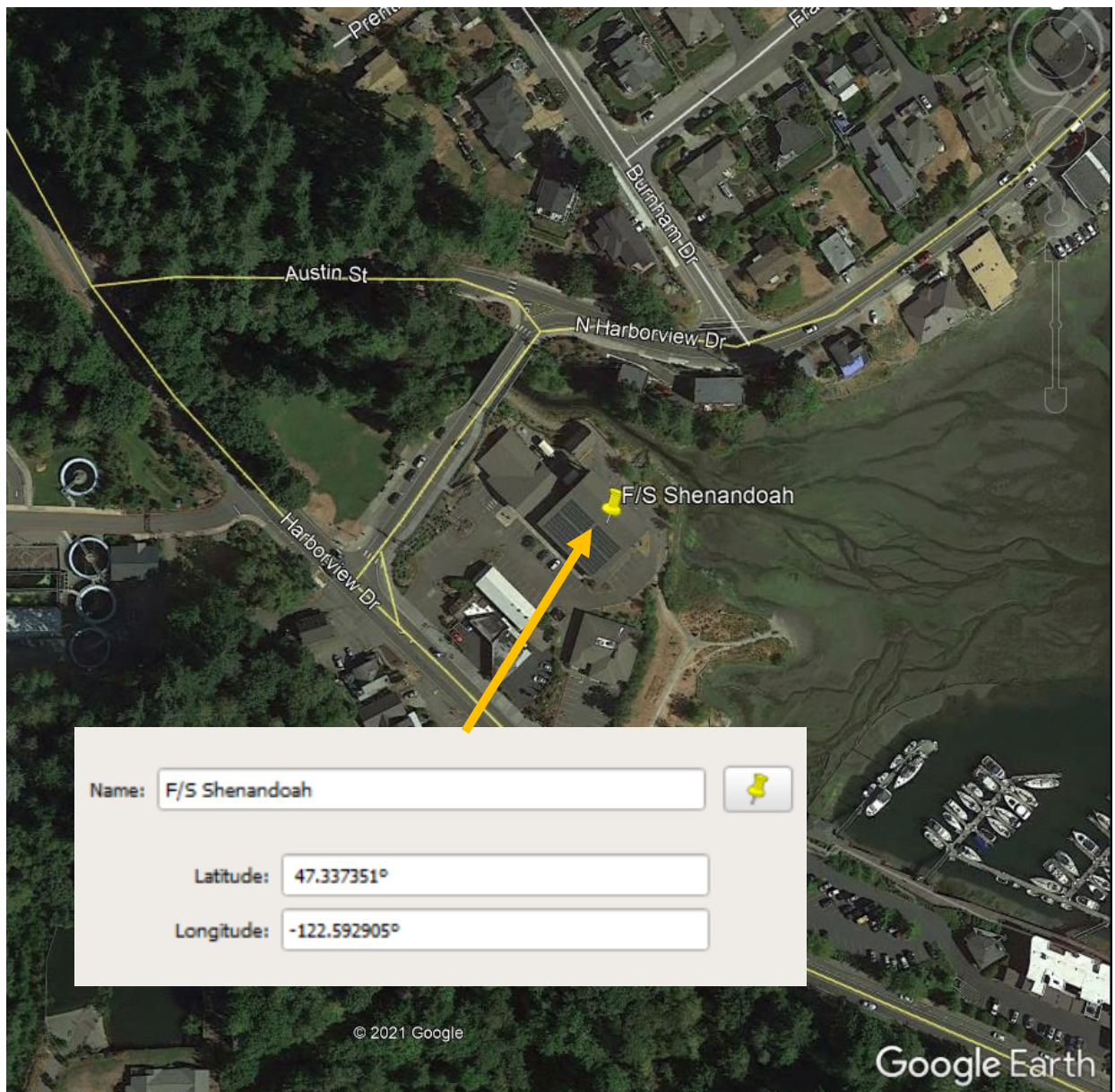
Ladds, Dylan "Shenandoah" Dooster Film (Release date Summer of 2021)

Harbor History Museum Shenandoah Move (February 2003)
<https://vimeo.com/269382641>

Oral History/Interviews:

J) Map and Photographs

Attach copies of historic maps or photos if available, and current photos (5 x 7 B & W). Include a current map – appropriate U.S.G.S. map and parcel map – with the location of the property and its boundaries clearly marked. (see instructions)



Purse Seiner SHENANDOAH

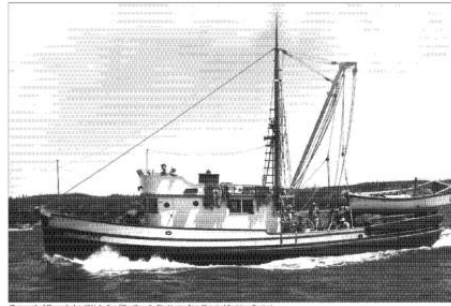
Gig Harbor, Washington

Built 1925

Skansie Shipbuilding Co.

The *Shenandoah* slid down the ways of the Skansie Ship Building Co. and into Gig Harbor in the winter of 1925. A classic purse seine design, she was one of the early vessels in Gig Harbor's growing commercial fishing fleet. She was built for Pasco Dorotich, a pioneer Gig Harbor fishing boat owner and skipper.

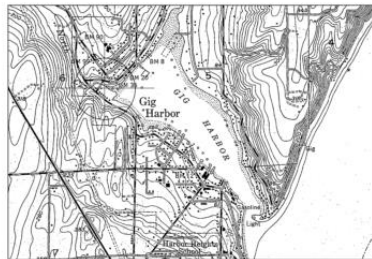
The *Shenandoah* is one of the last of the Gig Harbor-built purse seiners and one of only two Skansie-built fishing vessels still remaining in the harbor. Her legacy is rich with the heritage of the families who operated these timeless vessels, of the commercial fishing industry that supported the growing community, and of the carpenters and shipwrights who built innovation and beauty into every vessel launched.



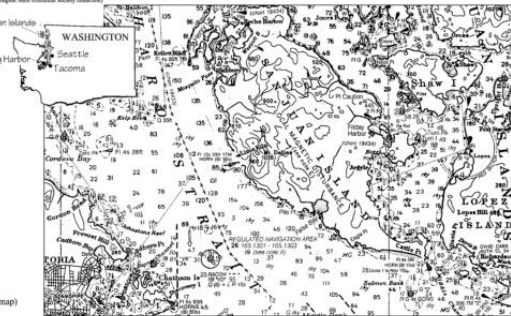
Photograph of *Shenandoah* in 1965, by Ken Otter (from the Washington State Historical Society collection)

The *Shenandoah* Recording Project was cosponsored by the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), The Coastal Heritage Alliance (CHA), and The Harbor History Museum (HHM). The vessel was documented by Todd Croteau - HAER Maritime Program Coordinator, Mike Vlahovich - CHA Founding Director, Shawn Janutz, Natalya Locke, and Anthony Vlahovich, CHA Apprentices. Text was prepared by Vicki Blackwell, Curator of the HHM.

The SHENANDOAH was donated to the Harbor History Museum in 2000. The vessel was documented on land just north of the harbor.



Above: Location map of Gig Harbor showing location of *Shenandoah* and the Skansie boat ways. (USGS map)
Right: Location map of the San Juan Island waters that *Shenandoah* fished. (USGS map)

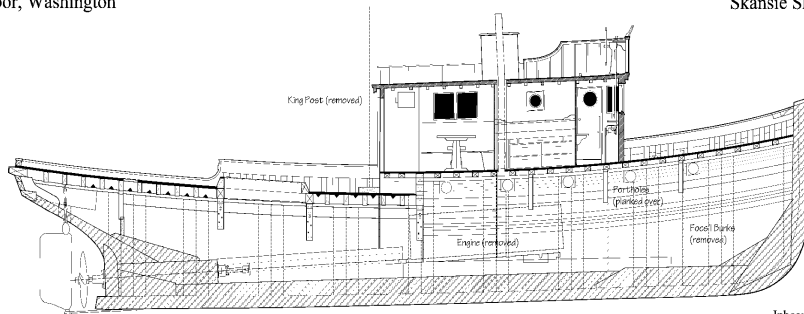


Purse Seiner SHENANDOAH

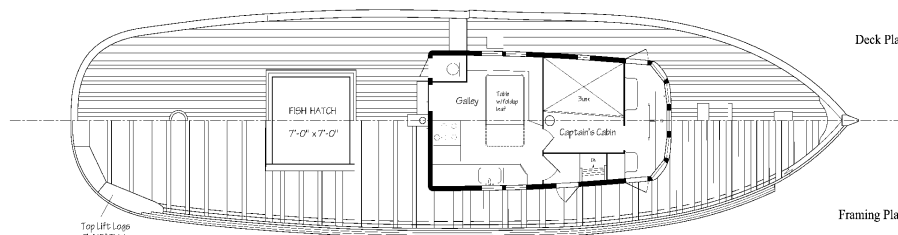
Gig Harbor, Washington

Built 1925

Skansie Shipbuilding Co.

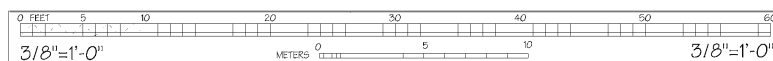


Inboard Profile



Deck Plan

Framing Plan



DESIGNED BY: TODD A. CROTEAU, 2007
DRAWN BY: NATALYA LOCKE, 2007
LATEST DATE: 10/10/2007
LATEST DATE: 10/10/2007

PURSE SEINER SHENANDOAH
GIG HARBOR, WASHINGTON
PIERCE COUNTY

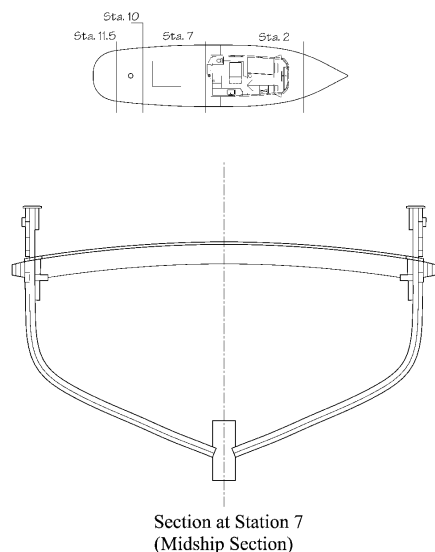
WASHINGTON
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GIG HARBOR

WASHINGTON
PIERCE COUNTY
GIG HARBOR

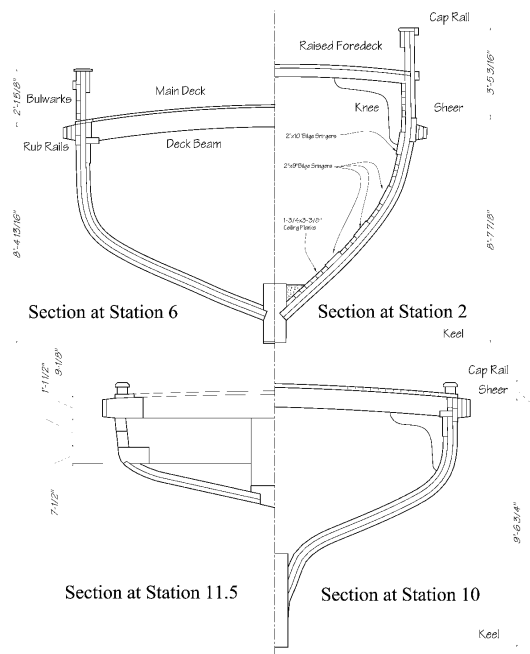
Purse Seiner SHENANDOAH

Gig Harbor, Washington

Built 1925
Skansie Shipbuilding Co.



SCALE: 3/4"=1'-0"
0 1 2 3 4 5 FEET
0 50 100 150 CENTIMETERS

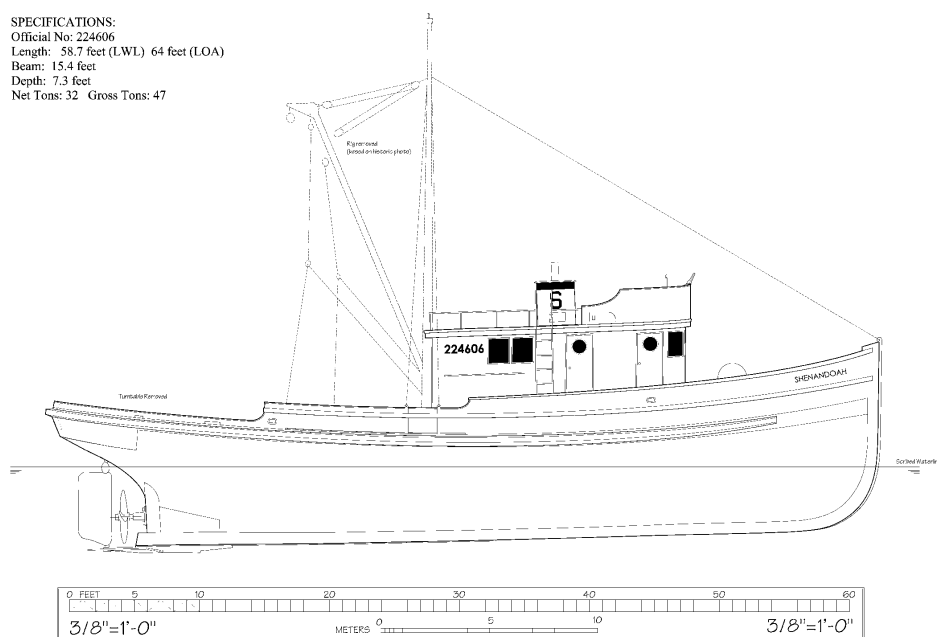


Purse Seiner SHENANDOAH

Gig Harbor, Washington

Built 1925
Profile

SPECIFICATIONS:
Official No: 224606
Length: 58.7 feet (LWL) 64 feet (LOA)
Beam: 15.4 feet
Depth: 7.3 feet
Net Tons: 32 Gross Tons: 47

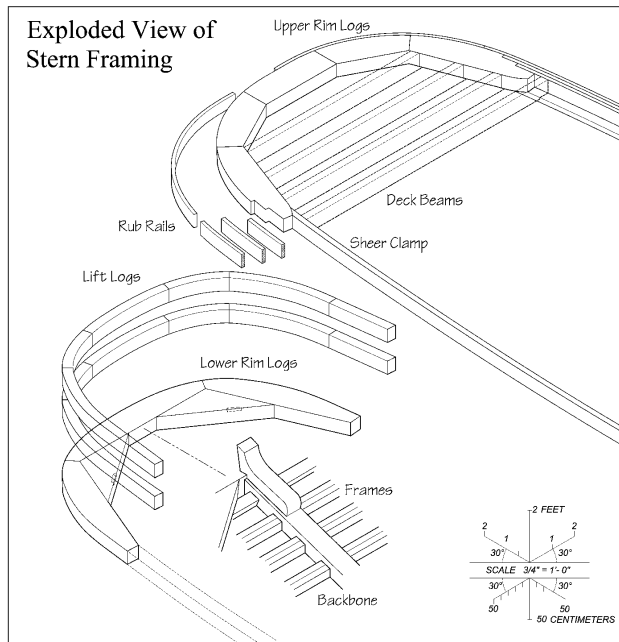
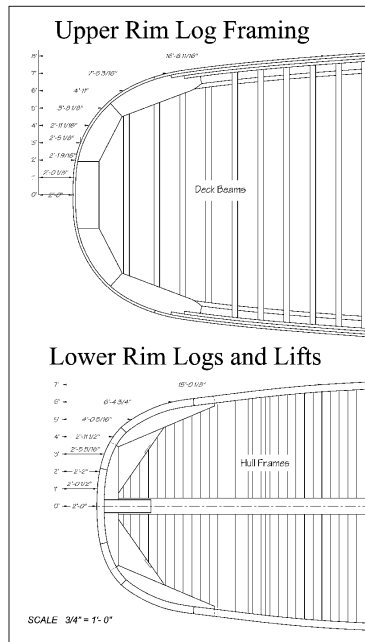


Purse Seiner SHENANDOAH

Gig Harbor, Washington

Built 1925

Skansie Shipbuilding Co.



DESIGNED BY: T. A. CRUTCHER, JR.
 DRAWN BY: J. A. CRUTCHER, JR.
 CHECKED BY: J. A. CRUTCHER, JR.
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 BUREAU OF FISHERY
 GIG HARBOR
 PURSE SEINER SHENANDOAH
 PIERCE COUNTY
 WASHINGTON 6-7
 WA-178



Purse seiner *Shenandoah* at sea, ca.1950



Purse seiner *Shenandoah* moored in Gig Harbor, April 4, 1925
Courtesy Tacoma Public Library, Marvin D. Boland Collection (BOLAND-B12220)



Skansie Shipbuilding Company, Harborview Drive, Gig Harbor, 1926
Courtesy Tacoma Public Library (BU-13892)



Skansie Shipbuilding Company, Harborview Drive, Gig Harbor, ca. 1915
Courtesy Tacoma Public Library, Carlson-Ambrose Collection (TPL-4237)



F/V Shenandoah morning next to dock, location unknown. ca. 1935
Courtesy Gig Harbor History Museum



Purse Seiner moorage, Friday Harbor, WA. ca. 1979
Courtesy of John Dustrude.



F/V Shenandoah, at temporary shelter north of downtown Gig Harbor, Feb 2008
Courtesy of DAHP

F/V Shenandoah – Current Images











